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FM USMISSION USNATO
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INFO RUEHZG/NATO EU COLLECTIVE
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC

UNCLAS USNATO 000574

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E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: CHANGING TIDES ON MISSILE DEFENSE? BRUSSELS THINK
TANK BLASTS RUSSIAN REPRESENTATIVE

¶1. Further evidence that we're making progress on missile defense with Europe, Russian speakers got an earful from a previously skeptical leading Brussels think tank at an 22 October European Security Forum entitled &Does Europe need a new Missile Defense? hosted by the Center for European Policy Studies (CEPS).

¶2. After presentations describing positions of the US (former USDP Walt Slocombe), Russian (Alexander Pikayev, Disarmament and International Security Institute in Moscow) and Europe (Oliver Thraenert, Security Policy Research Group in Berlin), USNATO DCM and Armaments Director laid out the new US positions from the 2 2 talks in Moscow, and as presented to the NAC and NRC on 17 October. In response to our presentation, seminar chair Francois Heisbourg (Fondation Pour La Recherche Strategique) directed at Pikayev a strong critique of the Russian positions, as follows:

-- While still critical of the basic US proposal, which had put Europe in the difficult position of being &in the middle between Russia and the US, the latest US position, especially &phased activation was a huge concession.

-- &The US has effectively conceded on a point of principle regarding threat assessment by deciding that the MD system would not go live until an Iranian threat was clear.

-- &It will now be hard for Europeans to defend the Russian position. You will be very lonely. You will take countermeasures, but so what?

-- Heisbourg also made the point that on Kosovo, Russia was directly running up against European, not American, interests.

¶3. Other presentations (except for the Russian one), while to one degree or another critical of specific US actions, generally came down in favor of a missile defense system for Europe.

¶4. This forum is one example of our success in building consensus in Europe in that there was no debate about the need for a European missile defense capability but rather the discussion was almost completely focused on how to get Russia to participate.

NULAND